

RESTORATION UPDATE

A newsletter on the Salton Sea Restoration Project

Salton Sea Authority

September 2004

www.saltonsea.ca.gov

Senator Ducheny Confirms Prop. 50 Funds For Use at Salton Sea

In a recent letter to the Secretary of the State Resources Agency, Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny expressed concerns over the use of Prop. 50 funds to purchase property in Blythe for habitat purposes. She requested that the state return the funds to ensure their intended use for Salton Sea Restoration.

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) purchased this property for \$11.5 million using Proposition 50 funds designated for the Salton Sea.

While the statute designating this

money for the Salton Sea had a broad definition, Senator Ducheny wrote, that such usage, "is not consistent with the desires of my constituents, nor with our mutual goal of ensuring maximum resources are available to implement the final Salton Sea Restoration alternative."

The WCB acquisition was apparently purchased for its habitat value, but came from a relatively small amount of \$50 million allocated to the Salton Sea for ecosystem restoration. According to Senator Ducheny, "This was not reviewed by the Salton Sea Advisory Committee, was not done at the request of the Department of Water Resources that is responsible for Salton Sea Restoration, and does not appear to advance the goal of an enhanced and protected Salton Sea."

Senator Ducheny requested that in order to restore integrity in this process, "money should be allocated for this purchase from another source and returned to the

Salton Sea Restoration Fund. The acquisition of the property with these Proposition 50 funds inflames the concerns of Salton Sea advocates. A refund of this money will restore confidence in the process and keep our focus on Salton Sea Restoration."

Salton Sea Authority Chairman Gary Wyatt applauded Senator Ducheny for honoring her legislative intent regarding the Salton Sea Restoration Fund and Prop. 50 monies intended for use at the Sea. "By her actions, Senator Ducheny honors both her state and local commitments. We deeply appreciate her efforts on behalf of the Sea, now and in the future."



Senator Denise Moreno Ducheny

**Please join us in welcoming
Salton Sea Authority's
New Executive Director,
Ron Enzweiler, whose first
day is October 4th!**

CALFED Legislation Recognizes Salton Sea Authority

On September 15th, the U.S. Senate approved legislation which requires the Federal government to coordinate with the state of California and the Salton Sea Authority on completion of a feasibility study on a preferred alternative for Salton Sea Restoration. The bill is sponsored by Senators Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer (D-Calif.). It authorizes \$395 million for CALFED, a balanced program to increase California's water supply, reliability and quality and to help restore sensitive water ecosystems.

The Salton Sea federal feasibility study is due December 2006, the same date that the state is due to decide on a course for restoring the Sea. Local officials have long been pressing for both state and federal cooperation in mapping out a shared strategy for the Sea's restoration.

"Passage of this legislation was a long-time coming and it is the result of hard work to reach a bipartisan consensus involving a wide range of stakeholders," Senator Feinstein said. "I firmly believe that the 2000-2001 energy crisis foreshadowed what could happen with water if we fail to plan ahead. That's why it is urgent that Congress approve this bill and it be signed by the President."

Feinstein went on to say, "Without CALFED, there is not going to be enough water to meet California's needs. The last time California increased its water infrastructure was the 1960s when the State's population was 16 million. It's now 36 million and is expected to climb to 50 million by 2020. This legislation is needed now."

Salton Sea Authority Chairman Gary

Wyatt underlined the importance of federal involvement in restoring the Salton Sea. "We have been working hard to cement the cooperation and collaboration of federal and state authorities with our local commitment to restoration. The Senators' efforts are necessary and most appreciated."

For more information:

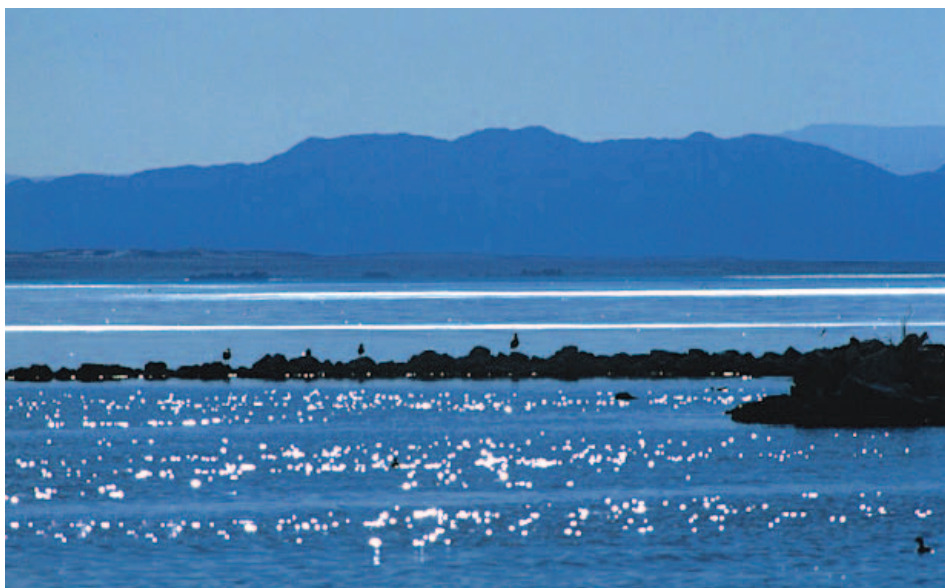
<http://feinstein.senate.gov/04Releases/r-calfed7.htm>

Register by October 14th for Coachella Valley Water Symposium

There are few issues more important to the Coachella Valley's future than water. Recognizing that, the Coachella Valley Water District has developed a Water Management Plan which is a blueprint for meeting the valley's long-term water needs through conservation and new water resources.

As such, they are hosting the Coachella Valley Water Symposium on October 20th as a forum to review this plan and to provide lively panel discussions about vital water issues. In addition to an overview of CVWD's plan, groundwater management; water and the economy; conservation; the delicate balance between habitat and development and tribal water issues will be highlighted.

Registration begins at 8 am for the 9 am – 3:15 pm symposium which includes a catered lunch at the Renaissance Esmeralda in Indian Wells. Participation is \$35 and advance reservations are due October 14th.



CALFED legislation calls for feasibility study on a preferred alternative by December 2006.

Economic Development Dependent on Cooperation and Certainty

In the Coachella Valley, development has been moving and growing eastward. Salton Sea Restoration is a critical component in determining if this growth will include the sea and its surrounding areas. Building Industry Association Desert Chapter's Executive Director, Ed Kibbey, compares that possibility to "a hole in the donut."

Ed explained, "There is a lot of land around the sea and a lot of inexpensive land. Some people will purchase for an investment because they are hopeful." One such individual is resident, investor and realtor Larry Anderson.

When the Salton Sea Congressional Task Force was formed in 1997, it heralded a new beginning for Anderson who said, "That was a signal to me that it was safe to move here." Since then, Anderson says "I've been following this more closely than perhaps any other person." And he has good reason. He purchased 35 lots on the water at the time and in 1997, built a model home.

He sold 14 of the lots in June and is now closing escrow on the model home. The balance of Anderson's prime real estate just came on the market which is great news for potential investors and homeowners as there are no other water-front lots available, according to Anderson.

Anderson will be building a "spec" home

in the \$350,000 - \$400,000 range this Fall and he has like-minded company as well; another developer is doing the same thing.

"When I first came here the price of a waterfront lot was \$2000 - \$5000. I have sold one for as much as \$100,000 and none lower than \$45,000. I expect them to double or even quadruple in value once the plan is agreed to," Anderson said. He added that he is optimistic that "we'll see massive development here within the next year."

This optimism is based on the restoration plan that Anderson calls "perfect." He states, "It is perfect in that this particular plan would have positive impact on all three of the major sea issues which are salinity, excessive nutrients and water level, thereby creating a manageable sea. Economic development will accelerate with the plan; there is no doubt in my mind it will happen."

Kibbey cautioned, "I think the developers are hopeful, but the problem with development is you've got to have some certainty. And until there can be some kind of agreement between, state, local and federal agencies, there will be no absolute certainty."

Kibbey said that adding the fact of the bad odor, poor air quality and no reliable infrastructure, the certainty factor decreases even more. He added, "If there is not some way to recover and rejuvenate the sea, it will

be worthless land with a great big mud hole."

Kibbey summed it up with, "The folks who are buying there now for roll-over had better be patient people because as long as the future remains undetermined, we are not going to see any meaningful development there."

DWR to Attend Next SSA Board Meeting

Department of Water Resources Deputy Director Joe Grindstaff is expected to attend the Salton Sea Authority's next board meeting in El Centro at the IID office. SSA Chairman Gary Wyatt said, "He intends to talk with the board to facilitate communication between the Department and the Authority. He has indicated he desires a closer relationship between the two entities for the purpose of a cooperative effort in reaching a solution for the Salton Sea." Grindstaff will also meet with various members of the board independently to answer questions and to resolve concerns. The board meeting is October 28 at 10 am at IID in El Centro.

Rick Hoffman Named Co-Chair to Salton Sea Advisory Committee

Rick Hoffman, Senior Legislative Aide to Riverside County Supervisor Marion Ashley has been elected co-chair on the State Salton Sea Advisory Committee. The appointment was made at the Committee's September meeting held in San Diego.

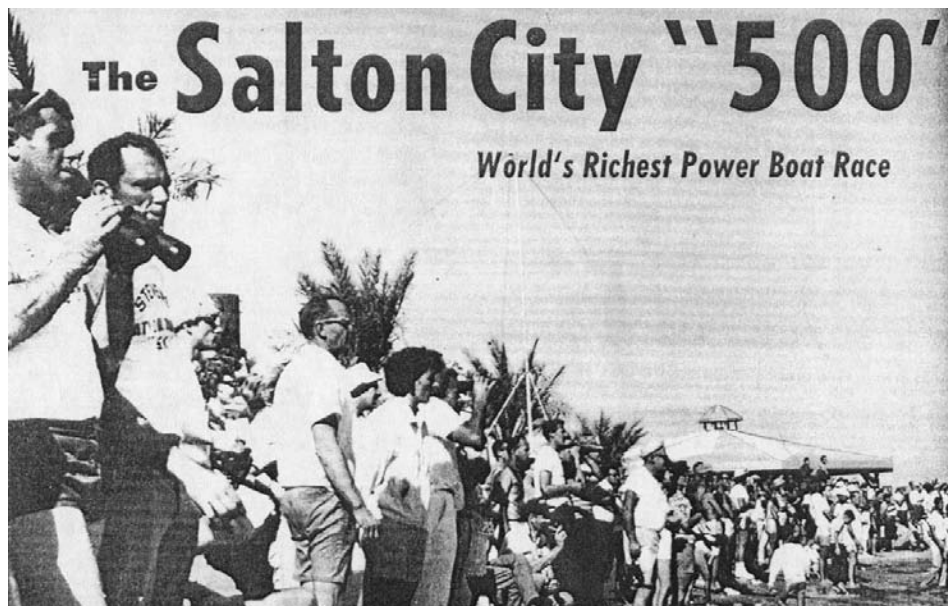
Salton Sea Hosts World's Longest Continuous JetCraft Race Scheduled on October 23rd

Approximately 25 teams will participate in the Salton Sea "400" Endurance Offshore Championship - a jetcraft race covering 400 miles, or 8 hours – whichever comes first – beginning at 9 am October 23rd.

Teams will be comprised of up to three people with each racer taking their respective turn(s) according to their team's strategy. The race is continuous, with stops only for refueling and/or rider changes.

The growing popularity of Four-Stroke models such as Honda, SeaDoo, Kawasaki, Yamaha and Polaris allow for much longer races with further distances.

More than any other venue, the Salton Sea is conducive for an event of this magnitude because it is large enough for an 8 to 10 mile course and the high salinity and



The Salton Sea has a rich history of power boat racing dating as far back as the 1950's.

consequent buoyancy allow for unheard of speeds and distances.

For spectator or race entry information, call Lou Peralta at (760) 578-6258, e-mail lou@bpmotorsports.net or log onto www.bpmotorsports.net.

Exhibit Opening Reception



The Opening Reception for "Facts and Fictions of Ancient Lake Cahuilla" will be held at the Agua Caliente Cultural Museum November 10, 2004 at 6 pm.

Join the ACCM for refreshments and learn about the history of this ancient body of water and the Cahuilla people who lived on its shores.

This event is free and open to the public for more Information: (760) 778-1079

MEETINGS SCHEDULE

Board of Directors

October 28th, 10am

Imperial Irrigation District - El Centro

Technical Advisory Meeting

November 11th, 10:30am

TBD

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